

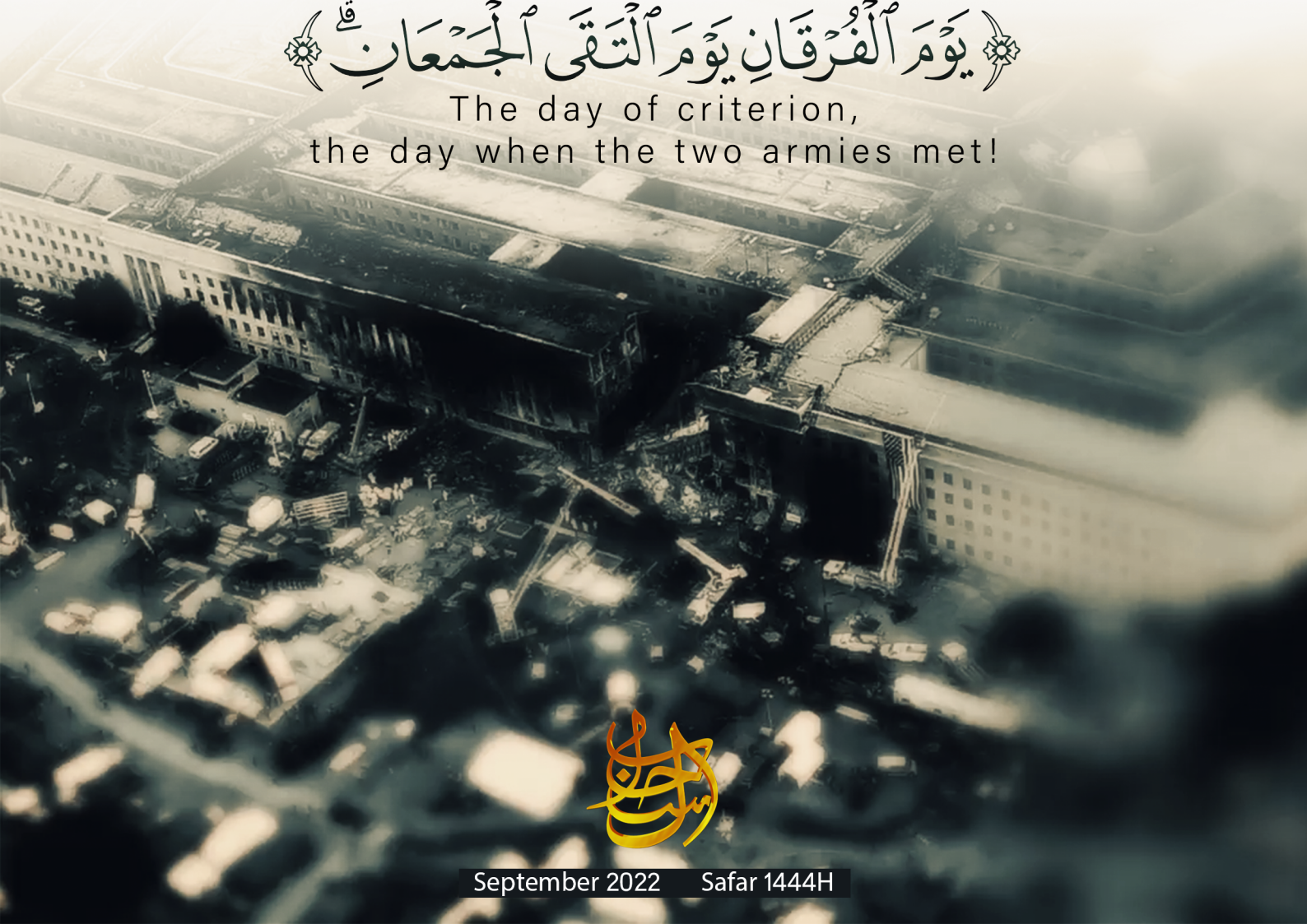


THE STRATEGIC GAINS OF THE DAY OF CRITERION

Between the Great Battle of Badr and the
Contemporary Badr of 9/11

﴿يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ التَّلَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ﴾

The day of criterion,
the day when the two armies met!



The morning of the 17th of Ramadan in the 2nd year of Hijrah was a distinctive historical marker that divided global history into pre-Badr and post-Badr periods. Interestingly enough, the great powers of the time did not realize the significance of this battle and paid little attention to the circumstances that led to it until the capitals of the Persian and Roman empires had been overrun by Muhammadan Arabian forces in the era of the Leader of the Believers, Abu Hafs Omar bin al Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him).

The Battle of Badr, often referred to as 'Yaum al Furqan' or the Day of Criterion between truth and falsehood, is considered a decisive watershed by most historians. Given the almost disproportionate numerical superiority of the disbelievers and the tremendous resources at their disposal, Muslims,

on the day of Badr, were at best a weak and negligible minority. They had set out to intercept a trade caravan and simply did not possess the weapons and equipment necessary to engage in war, whereas the disbelievers had made preparations for this battle and possessed sufficient knights, weapons and equipment to overrun any opponent. It was Allah's will that the Muslims, completely lacking the preparations for war, should face this heavily equipped army and emerge victorious in this decisive battle at a time when they were at their weakest in material terms and were unable to return to their land and homes from which they had been expelled only two years earlier. The victory of a materially inferior Muslim force over a numerically and materially superior foe made the difference between faith and disbelief stand out.

It revealed the power of the allies of the Beneficent God and exposed the frailty of the allies of Satan. If, on that day, the Muslims had taken over the trade caravan, critics would have later downplayed the significance of the event, claiming that any 'unlawful' armed group could have done the same. This is why Allah deprived the Muslims of the goods of the caravan and tested them with the call to arms to face an army that had set out with a clear intent of engaging in war. And this made the contrast between the two sides even more stark and the victory of this small unprepared and ill-equipped force of believers over the army of Quraysh far more stunning.

The Battle of Badr is the first stop on a long journey of decisive historical battles in the course of Islam's brilliant military history. A lot has been written on this subject and the military history of Islam is rich

with stunning victories. My intent here, however, is to shed light on a contemporary Yaum al Furqan: 9/11. In its details, it bears strong resemblance with the Battle of Badr. Just as the disbelievers sought to draw attention away from their humiliation on the battlefield at Badr, the Americans went out of the way to focus the world's attention on the twin towers alone in a failed attempt to cover up the slap that America had received on its face in the form of the destruction of a large part of its military fortress and the killing of close to a thousand officials of the DoD. In spite of all the efforts to belittle the importance of this historical event and cover up and distort the facts about it, 9/11 will be remembered by history as one of the unforgettable raids of Islamic history and an extension of the first Battle of Badr in which the pillars of the idol of that age had crumbled, just as the



twin towers crumbled in the modern day Badr. The historical significance of these events was best articulated by the American historian, Paul Kennedy, when he said that the real beginning of the twenty first century was September 11, 2001, for it divided contemporary history into pre-9/11 and post-9/11 eras. This is why the events of September 11, represent a major watershed in the history of mankind. In spite of all its efforts to regain the balance it lost on that day and re-establish its hegemony over the world, America will never be the same again. There is a world of difference between America before and after the collapse of the biggest symbols of its power: Pentagon- the headquarter

of the Department of Defense of the so-called sole superpower- and the twin skyscrapers of the World Trade Center- the ultimate symbol of the global hegemony of ruthless American capitalism. The power of 9/11 lies not merely in the scale of the destruction and the havoc it wrecked, but equally in the element of surprise, for it came in a manner that was dramatic and entirely unexpected. Let us return to the past to review carefully a page of our glorious Islamic history. On the morning of September 11, 2001, news of an unprecedented

attack inside the American homeland and on the symbols of America's military and economic power made headlines throughout the world. It soon transpired that nineteen Muslim warriors had given America a rude awakening on its own soil, right in the middle of its capital. One name was on the lips of everyone across the world. A Muslim man residing in a distant Islamic land, named Osama bin Laden, had aimed four spears from Qandahar; the spears landed in the heart of Washington and New York. Three struck at the heart of



America's military and economic power. Together, the four spears claimed over 6000 American lives, twice the casualties suffered by the US at Pearl Harbour. In a raid that was televised live across the world, a small group of 19 fearless Muslims had razed to the ground a large part of America's military fortress and erased from New York's skyline the twin towers, the pre-eminent symbols of America's global economic hegemony. The world had never seen or heard anything of this nature. In the annals of military history, 9/11 will undoubtedly be remembered as an unprecedented act of courage and daredevilry. Those who executed these raids were not twenty or a hundred patient

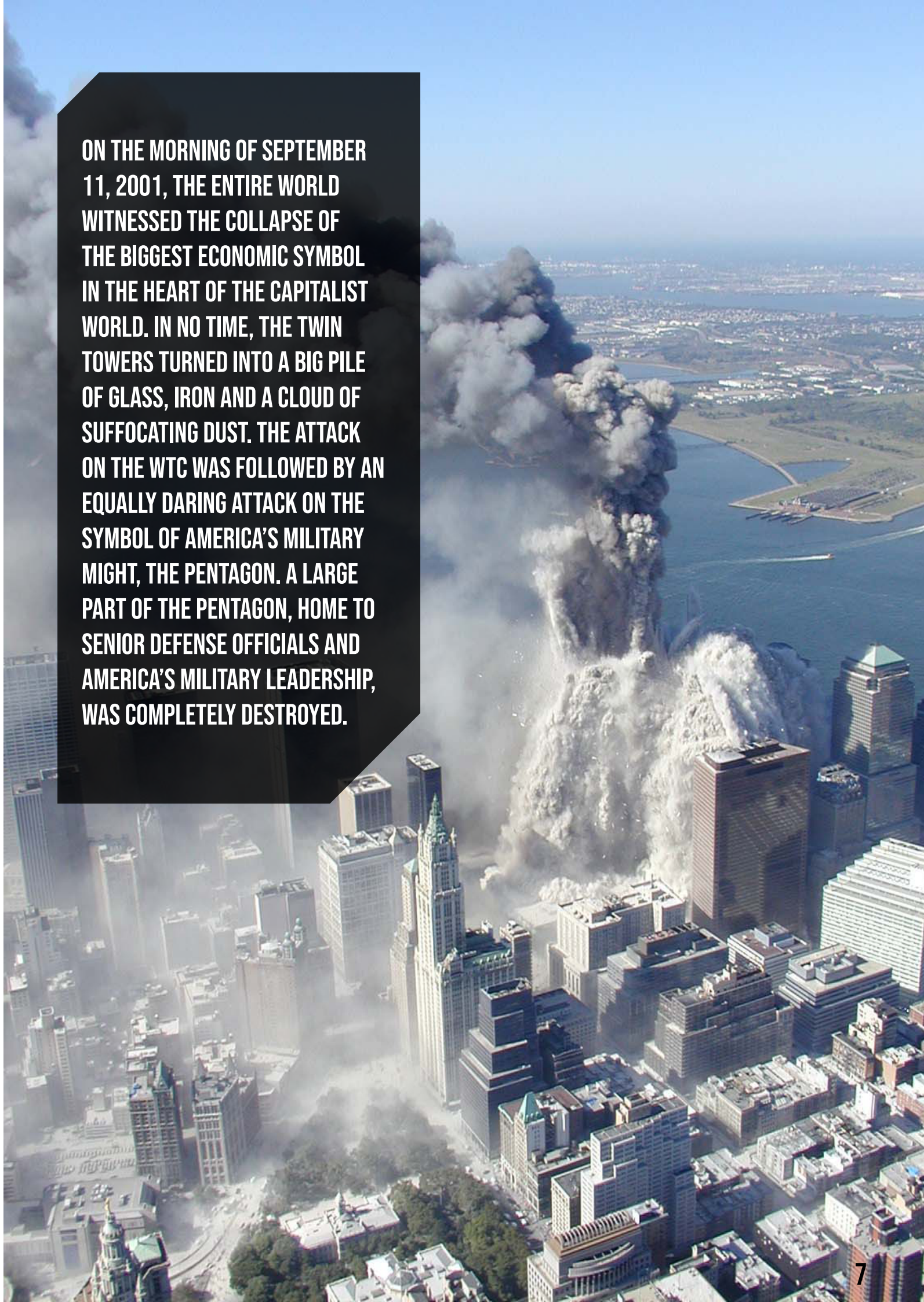
believers- in Quranic parlance- who would overcome two hundred or a thousand disbelievers; they were in fact just 19 fearless souls who overcame 6000 infidels... On the morning of September 11, 2001, the entire world witnessed the collapse of the biggest economic symbol in the heart of the capitalist world. In no time, the twin towers turned into a big pile of glass, iron and a cloud of suffocating dust. The attack on the WTC was followed by an equally daring attack on the symbol of America's military might, the Pentagon. A large part of the Pentagon, home to senior defense officials and America's military leadership, was completely destroyed. Air Force One hovered in the air for a long time, with a terrified US President inspecting the situation from the relative safety of the skies. It seemed that Bush, in a scene resembling the escape of Zainul Abideen- Tunisia's former president- in the wake of the Arab Spring, would make a run for his life on Air Force One. The President of the greatest military power that mankind has ever known was searching for security in the skies on the morning of 9/11, unwilling and afraid to land on the ground, as if the Muslim raiders had occupied his country!

With this stunning blow, the nineteen knights buried once and forever the idea of America as a secure fortress protected by a large arsenal of nuclear weapons; immune to

attacks from beyond its borders, insulated effectively from the rest of the world by the natural water barriers of the Atlantic and the Pacific. With the President going in hiding in the post-attack hours, America's prestige ended up where it had rightly belonged: the dust bin of history. In spite of all its might and arrogance, America suddenly found itself without effective leadership. The situation that followed these attacks reminds one today of recent developments in Sri Lanka, when the country suddenly found itself rudderless.

And this is how America became an ordinary, regular state, just like any other in the world, no longer the impregnable sole super power that could never be challenged. The truth is that American behavior on the international stage in the last two decades cannot be viewed independently of the impact of 9/11 on American psyche. The attacks left a deep imprint on America's behavior on the international stage. They represent a permanent wound; one that, perhaps, may never heal. The raids were an unpalatable insult to America's prestige; the entire episode could not have been more offensive and humiliating. And this is what made America behave in a manner that was increasingly reckless and deranged.

The attacks were equally a glaring indicator of America's decline as a global power; these events essentially marked the beginning of America's



ON THE MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, THE ENTIRE WORLD WITNESSED THE COLLAPSE OF THE BIGGEST ECONOMIC SYMBOL IN THE HEART OF THE CAPITALIST WORLD. IN NO TIME, THE TWIN TOWERS TURNED INTO A BIG PILE OF GLASS, IRON AND A CLOUD OF SUFFOCATING DUST. THE ATTACK ON THE WTC WAS FOLLOWED BY AN EQUALLY DARING ATTACK ON THE SYMBOL OF AMERICA'S MILITARY MIGHT, THE PENTAGON. A LARGE PART OF THE PENTAGON, HOME TO SENIOR DEFENSE OFFICIALS AND AMERICA'S MILITARY LEADERSHIP, WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED.

twilight era. A careful study of the rise and fall of nation reveals an important fact: whenever a great power reaches the peak of its strength, the symptoms of a slow but steady decline become somewhat noticeable. This pattern, however, is generally subtle and becomes discernable in hindsight only, often taking decades for the decay to reveal itself. In America's case, however, the element of decline, even at the peak of its strength, has always been too conspicuous. It is as if Allah, the Exalted, wants to remind the inhabitants of this world that His laws are all-prevailing; His dictates overrule everything else; His power unchallengeable. When He says 'Be', it 'Is'.

The Badr of September was America's

moment of misfortune and agony. The events came like a bolt out of the blue and were a misfit in the context of the pattern of America's ascendancy and absolute global hegemony. America, at the dawn of the century, was, for much of the Western World, a star that would continue to shine forever. Just a month prior to the attacks, a report by the British Foreign Ministry had confidently declared that until the year 2030 at least, America's military and economic superiority would remain unchallenged globally. 9/11 proved to

be the great shock that completely offset America's balance. The US suddenly found itself shaken to its core, no longer the sole global hegemon that it always sought to portray itself.

In fact, very few analysts at the time were able to discern the real long-term impact of the attacks on the global balance of power. In the immediate aftermath of the events, there was much difference of opinion on the implications of these tremendous developments. No one had anticipated anything on this scale; in fact, the beginning of the twenty first century could not have been more dramatic.



With the passage of time, some analysts, however, started realizing that the impact of these strikes on American hegemony would be significant and the change

in the balance of power on the global stage would be greater than anything anyone had initially expected.

In terms of the strategic gains of the attack, it was a severe economic and military setback for the American enemy. The military losses in this single attack exceeded the losses suffered by the United States in most of the wars that it has engaged in since WWII. The human toll of the attack on the Pentagon was especially significant given the fact that many of the officials killed in the attacks

had accumulated years of experience and expertise, far more valuable than high-tech military gadgetry. America entered the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq without the expertise that those killed in the Pentagon had to offer.

And this was one of the contributing factors in America's defeat in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

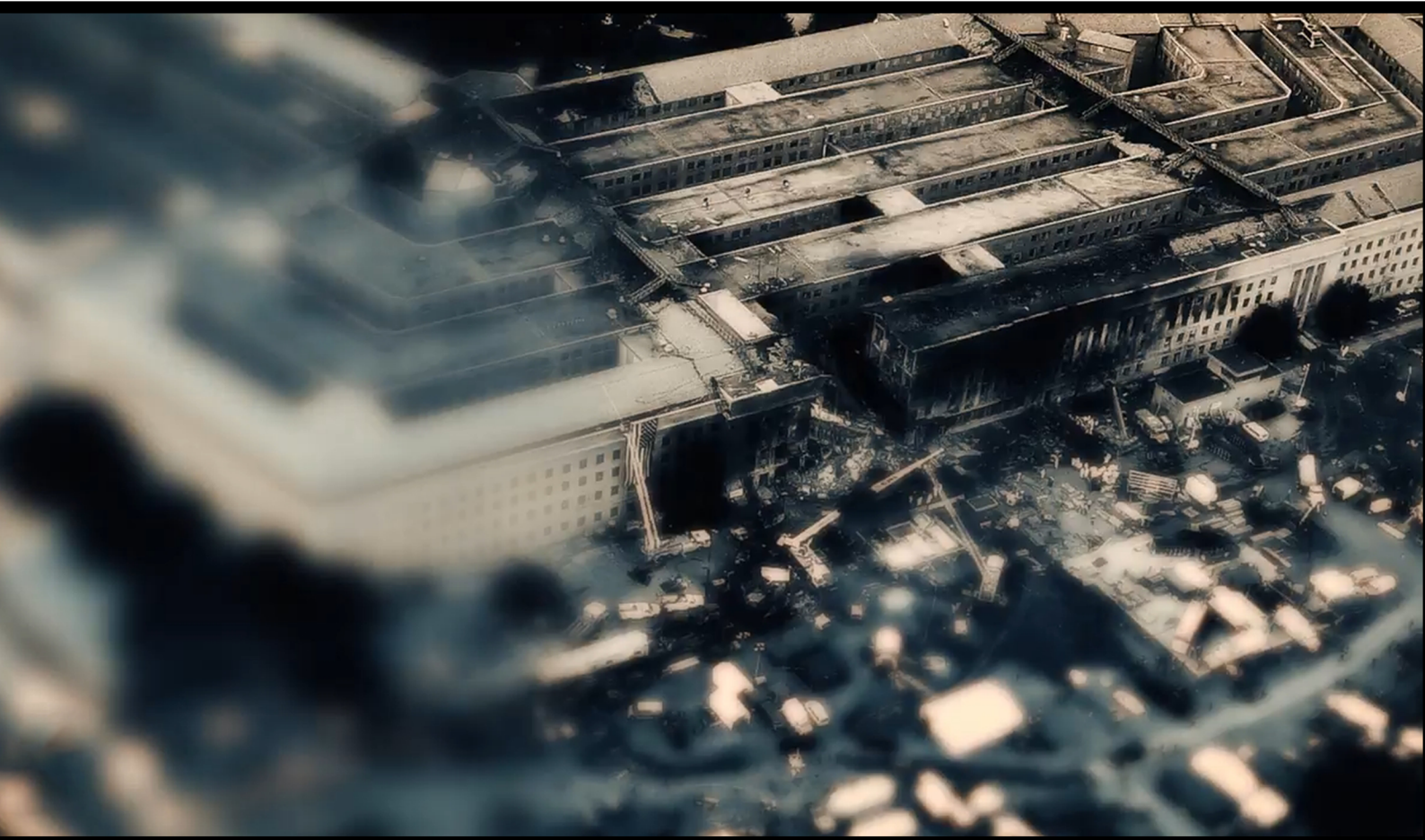
From an economic perspective, besides the immediate losses suffered in the form of the devastation wrecked by the raids, the attacks had a significant long-term impact on the American economy. The destruction of the twin towers resulted in severe losses for a large number of American companies. In the short run, the death of a large number of businessmen and financial brains paralyzed the companies and businesses run by them. With the passage of time, the financial strain on the entire US economy became increasingly evident. The truth is that 9/11 forced America into a dark tunnel and a financial crisis with no end in sight. In the years following the attacks, America's national debt accumulated in an unprecedented manner; the financial prosperity that it had enjoyed in the 90's came to a sudden end. Who could have imagined on September 11, 2001 that only twenty years later the United States government would find itself unable to guarantee the supply of milk powder for America's children and scenes of people fighting over a single liter of petrol would become increasingly commonplace across the US?

The almost simultaneous and hasty entry of America in two wars exposed not just America's military weakness but equally the lack of political will and commitment in Washington. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrated America's ignorance of history and of the complexities of the Muslim World. America entered Afghanistan and later Iraq with hastily assembled alliances that proved fragile over time. The lack of planning that accompanied the sudden entry of America in the twin wars burdened subsequent US administrations. The fact remains that it was beyond America's capacity and resources to entangle itself in military adventures abroad at a time when, for the first time in its history, the American homeland had become insecure.

Another related strategic gain of 9/11 that cannot be overlooked is that it ignited differences within the Christian-Crusader Western World. A largely Catholic Western Europe and an Orthodox Eastern Europe found in the post-9/11 world the opportunity to dethrone America from its position of the sole global hegemon. In the aftermath of America's defeat in Afghanistan and the war in Ukraine, this shift in the balance of power has become too obvious to be ignored. From a security standpoint, 9/11 was one of the worst intelligence failures in history. Nineteen individuals with very limited resources were able to penetrate America's civil and military defenses undetected. This led the

American people to question: What if a state or a military power were to attack the United States? What if these 'terrorists' possessed crude nuclear devices? What would happen if they were to deploy chemical or biological weapons on US soil?

The impact and ramifications of the events of 9/11 continue to be felt to this day. Indeed, for the foreseeable future, the aftershocks of this seismic event will not disappear. It is for this reason that 9/11 may be considered a continuation of the great Battle of Badr. A true evaluation of these events necessitates the same conditions that apply to the consensus of the jurists (al Ijma' al Fiqhi): the end of contemporaneity. And this is a condition for the evaluation to be unbiased and unprejudiced. Contemporaneity, or the quality of belonging to the same period of time, often stands in the way of an honest judgment. Throughout history, many historic personalities and decisive



battles did not gain recognition until the era to which they belonged- the contemporaneous era of bias, prejudice and jealousy- ended. It is hard to deny the fact that the world the day after the attacks was not the same world the day before. It is from this perspective that 9/11 is 'Yaum al Furqan', a watershed in the course of Islamic history. The 9/11 raids were marked by the same spirit of Badr and share many similarities with the first great battle in the history of Islam. So may Allah bless the defiant, pure souls

who sacrificed their lives in America's skies on that day! May peace be upon them in the eternal life!

To conclude, on the eve of Battle of

Badr, few recognized that the day marked the death knell of the great power of the time. The countdown to the fall of the disbelievers of Quraysh and the Roman and Persian empires began on Friday, 17/9/2 AH, from the battlefield of Badr. On Tuesday, 9/11/2001, there was little appreciation of the fact that the countdown of America's fall had just begun. What followed in the months and years to come was the beginning of the rise of the oppressed of this

world. Allah, the Glorious, says: "And we wished to do a favour to those who were weak and oppressed in the land, and to make them rulers and to make them the inheritors. And to empower them in the land, and let the Pharaoh, Haman and their armies

received from them that which they feared."

No one, no matter how great his ability to analyze and prophesize,

could have foreseen that less than twenty Muslim warriors armed with nothing but box-cutters would strike such a deadly blow to one of history's most powerful military juggernaut armed with spy satellites, a strong global intelligence network led by the CIA, and a massive military-industrial complex. It was nothing but the grace of the Almighty that led to the success of the vanguard of the Muslim Ummah in al- Qa'eda on that historic day which will be remembered for its embodiment of the

spirit of Jihad and defiance.

And our last prayer is that all praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon our Prophet, his family, Companions, and those who follow their way. ■

THE MILITARY LOSSES IN THIS SINGLE ATTACK EXCEEDED THE LOSSES SUFFERED BY THE UNITED STATES IN MOST OF THE WARS THAT IT HAS ENGAGED IN SINCE WWII. THE HUMAN TOLL OF THE ATTACK ON THE PENTAGON WAS ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT GIVEN THE FACT THAT MANY OF THE OFFICIALS KILLED IN THE ATTACKS HAD ACCUMULATED YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE, FAR MORE VALUABLE THAN HIGH-TECH MILITARY GADGETRY.



﴿وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ

وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ ﴿٦﴾

وَنُمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

وَنُرِيَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا

مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ ﴿٧﴾﴾

And we wished to do a favour to those who were weak and oppressed in the land, and to make them rulers and to make them the inheritors. And to empower them in the land, and let the Pharaoh, Haman and their armies received from them that which they feared.

